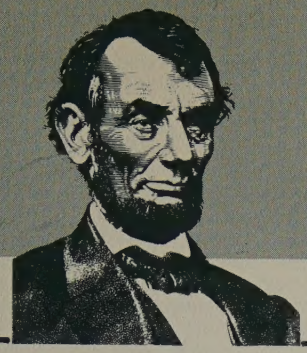

Lincoln Lore

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Number 1463 FORT WAYNE, INDIANA January, 1960

LINCOLN AND ASIA

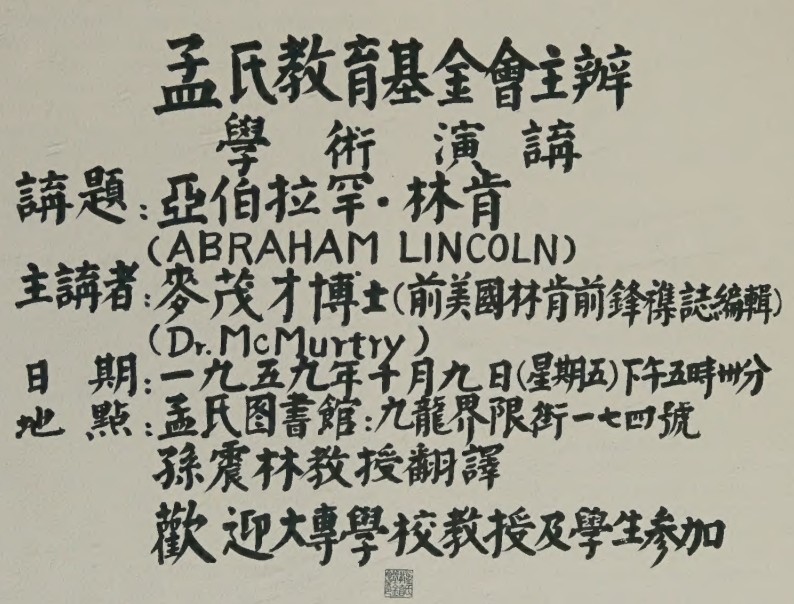
McMurtry's Report on a Lincoln Lecture Tour to the Far East

On June 5, 1959 I received a letter from Frederick A. Colwell, Chief of American Specialists Branch, International Educational Exchange Service of the Department of State, offering me a grant to visit the Far East as an American Specialist. The itinerary included the following countries:

Korea — last two weeks of September; Taiwan — one week; Hong Kong — one week; Indonesia — ten days; Singapore —one week; Malaya — one week; Thailand—two weeks.

My assignment was to deliver a series of lectures to focus attention on the Lincoln Sesquicentennial observance, American ideals and the role of the sixteenth president in United States history. As The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company officials were agreeable to making my services available to the United States government, I accepted the grant.

As 1959 was the Lincoln Sesquicentennial year, the United States Information Service posts were furnished with a considerable amount of Lincoln literature which was widely distributed. So, before my arrival in the Far East, the people were reading, in their own language or in English, about America's greatest president.



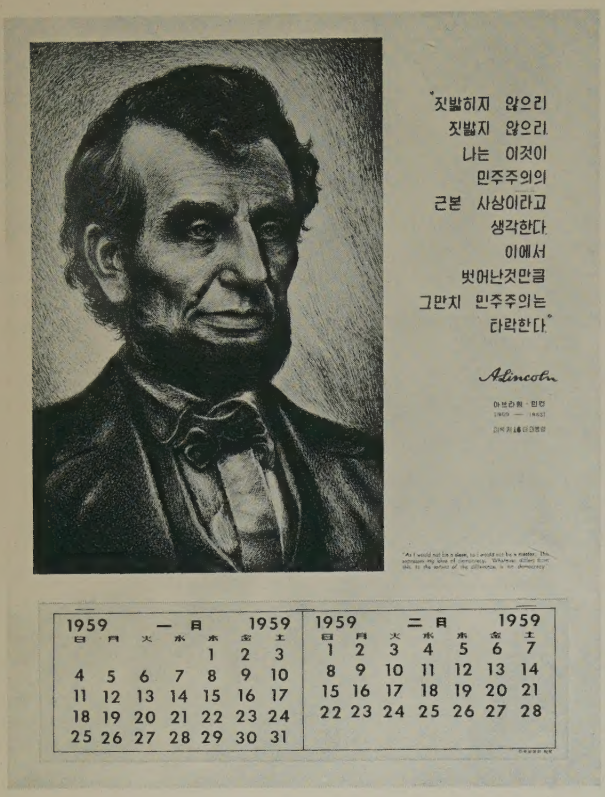
A handmade poster used in Hong Kong to inform the public that Dr. McMurtry would speak on Abraham Lincoln at the Mencius Foundation on October 9, 1959 at 5:30 p.m.

In making preparations for my lecture tour I took with me about twenty different speeches on as many phases of Lincoln's life. From these I hope to select some to fit the occasion as well as the intellectual level of my audience. Thinking, however, to make Lincoln more appealing to the Asian people I prepared a new lecture entitled "Lincoln and Asia." After introducing my topic, I quoted Mohandas Gandhi as follows: "Who can think of Abraham Lincoln without being uplifted by the life and example of this noble American?" Next I pointed out that Prime Minister Nehru is an ardent admirer of Abraham Lincoln, and I related in my speech how he had written to a friend in the United States that: "It is an honour to be associated in any way with the great name of Abraham Lincoln." Then I pointed out in my lecture that Nehru today draws daily inspiration from the life, career and deeds of Abraham Lincoln. I stated that on Nehru's desk there is a bronze hand of Lincoln made from a life mold taken in 1860 by a sculptor named Leonard W. Volk and how Nehru is quoted as having said, "I look at it every day, it is strong, firm and yet gentle. It gives me great strength."

I was quite pleased with the opening paragraphs of my speech until I showed a copy to the Cultural Officer of the American Embassy in Seoul, Korea. He told me my speech would not be appropriate in Korea because Nehru was thoroughly disliked due to his policy of neutralism. The theme that should be developed, according to this foreign service officer, was Lincoln's Unionism, because the people of South Korea fervently look forward to the day when they can be reunited with North Korea. My advisers were correct in their appraisal of the Korean mind because in the twenty speeches that I made in that country, I stressed the importance of Union and how Lincoln saved a divided country and my addresses met with huge success.

While I was better versed in Far Eastern affairs, I was determined to give my "Lincoln and Asia" lecture in Taiwan. By this time there had been incorporated into the speech several paragraphs on Lincoln and Union. In this lecture I related how 10,000 graduates from 200 high schools in Tokyo in 1958 had ranked Lincoln first of the most respected of all world figures. Then, too, it occurred to me that Taiwan (Formosa) would want Union with Mainland China. But an astute Foreign Service adviser informed me that the Chinese of Taiwan were not particularly interested in how Japanese school children would rank world figures and that the last thing that they wanted was Union with Mainland China—the Taiwan Chinese want to return to China once the political situation is changed in that unfortunate country.

Again my speech was politically at odds with the country to which I was assigned. However, my other lectures were enthusiastiaclly received and the numerous audiences that I addressed were eager to hear for the first



A Lincoln Sesquicentennial calendar featuring a portrait of Lincoln by a Filipino artist. These calendars were widely distributed in Korea and other countries in Asia by the United States Information Service.

time or have repeated again that Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the first president of modern China was an ardent admirer of Abraham Lincoln. According to a well established report an inquiry was made of China's first president as to what were his hopes for the future of China and the statesman replied: (letter to Mrs. Chan Jett of New York, N. Y., April 1921) "We wish to see established in our country the system of government which the great Lincoln in a memorable phrase, described as 'government of the people, by the people and for the people.'" This Gettysburg Adress quotation became Sun Yat-sen's three basic principles of government.

In preparing my new address I was eager to find out how many times Lincoln used the word Asia. I found one reference; however, there must undoubtedly be more. Lincoln said, in speaking before the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, Illinois, on January 27, 1838 that: "All the Armies of Europe, Asia and Africa combined, with all the treasure of the earth (our own excepted) in their military chest; with a Buonaparte for a commander, could not by force, take a drink from the Ohio, or make a track on the Blue Ridge in a trial of a thousand years." This statement, when taken out of context is not one designed to build good will between American and Asian countries, however, I did use the quotation on occasion when asked if Lincoln ever made any reference to the Far East. To have admitted that there was no record of Lincoln ever having mentioned that continent would have been disconcerting indeed.

While in Hong Kong I had no occasion to use my special "Lincoln and Asia" address. There I spoke at the Mencius Foundation and Hong Kong University using conventional subject topics which they especially requested. Nevertheless, my Asia speech would have occasioned little interest in that British Crown Colony as the people have little desire to participate in government in that peculiar and fabulous territory.

In Indonesia I used a paragraph of my speech to relate that President Sukarno is one of the modern statesmen in Asia who has come to admire Abraham Lincoln. He is reported to have said in Washington, D. C. that "Lincoln had been one of his teachers and that he looked to America as 'the center of an idea.'" Many of the people of Indonesia had forgotten that in 1949 the new republic had issued a series of postage stamps that included one carrying a portrait of Lincoln along with a portrait of vice-president Hatta.

Present day Indonesia is not a happy nation due to certain dictatorial powers assumed by its president and its soft currency. The nature of my speeches were reviewed by the Indonesia authorities before delivery, and I experienced some fearful moments at the University of Indonesia when my statement that Lincoln "never deceived his constituency regarding domestic and foreign affairs" provoked a noisy demonstration.

In Singapore I spoke at six universities and educational institutions, and by this time I had practically abandoned my "Lincoln and Asia" lecture. As in all the countries that I visited in Asia, my engagements were arranged by the Ministry of Education. Like the people of Hong Kong, the people of Singapore knew very little about United States history, due primarily to the fact that the British system of education in crown colonies has failed to find a place in their curriculum for such a course. Because many of the Chinese students in the university groups which I addressed were known to be avowed Red China communists, I often used a topic entitled, "If Lincoln Were Here." In this speech I used extensive quotations or implications from Lincoln's own words concerning agriculture, world peace, law enforcement, private property, labor and capital, communism and socialism, education and civil rights. In the question and answer periods many pertinent questions were asked. An example of which is, "Would Lincoln recognize Red China?" Some questions dealt with matters other than Lincoln. A few students asked about negro segregation and Little Rock. On one occasion a student told me that he had read and that he firmly believed slavery still existed in the United States. Needless to state, these questions were answered as astutely as possible and the query about slavery was declared preposterous.

In Malaya, a delightful country, my audiences were primarily interested in the academic aspects of Lincoln's life. Some of my distinguished hearers were the French Ambassador, the Prime Minister of Selangor, the Indonesian Ambassador, the Ambassador of the United Arab Republic, the Ambassador of Burma, and the charge d'affaires of the American Embassy. As in all the countries which I visited, the film, "Meet Mr. Lincoln", an N. B. C. production was enthusiastically viewed by all present.

In Thailand my "Lincoln and Asia" lecture was acceptable in every detail. Particularly did they like the account of Lincoln's correspondence with King Mongut of Siam. The Siamese King apparently addressed two letters dated February 14, 1861 to President James Buchanan, as president-elect Lincoln was not inaugurated until March 4 of that year. There is also some evidence that King Mongut addressed a letter to Franklin Pierce at the time he was President of the United States. It was Lincoln, however, who acknowledged the letters on February 3, 1862 as follows:

Abraham Lincoln,
President of the United States of America.

To His Majesty Somdetch Phra Paramendr Maha Mongut,

King of Siam,
&c., &c.

Great and Good Friend: I have received Your Majesty's two letters of the date of February 14th., 1861.

I have also received in good condition the royal gifts which accompanied those letters,—namely, a sword of costly materials and exquisite workmanship; a photographic likeness of Your Majesty and of Your Majesty's beloved daughter; and also two elephants' tusks of length and magnitude such as indicate that they could have belonged only to an animal which was a native of Siam.

Your Majesty's letters show an understanding that our laws forbid the President from receiving these rich presents as personal treasures. They are therefore accepted in accordance with Your Majesty's desire as tokens of

your good will and friendship for the American People. Congress being now in session at this capital, I have had great pleasure in making known to them this manifestation of Your Majesty's munificence and kind consideration.

Under their directions the gifts will be placed among the archives of the Government, where they will remain perpetually as takens of mutual esteem and pacific dispositions more honorable to both nations than any trophies of conquest could be.

I appreciate most highly Your Majesty's tender of good offices in forwarding to this Government a stock from which a supply of elephants might be raised on our own soil. This Government would not hesitate to avail itself of so generous an offer if the object were one which could be made practically useful in the present condition of the United States.

Our political jurisdiction, however, does not reach a latitude so low as to favor the multiplication of the elephant, and steam on land, as well as on water, has been our best and most efficient agent of transportation in internal commerce.

I shall have occasion at no distant day to transmit to Your Majesty some token of indication of the high sense which this Government entertains of Your Majesty's friendship.

Meantime, wishing for Your Majesty a long and happy life, and for the generous and emulous People of Siam the highest possible prosperity, I commended both to the blessing of Almighty God. Your Good Friend,

Abraham Lincoln.

Washington, February 3, 1862.
By the President:

William H. Seward, Secretary of State.

Lincoln did make known to Congress the receipt of the letters and gifts from King Mongut. On February 26, 1862 the president addressed a communication to the Senate and House of Representatives as follows: "In transmitting to Congress the accompanying copy of two letters, bearing date the 14th of February, 1861, from his Majesty the Major King of Siam to the President of the United States, and of the president's answer thereto, I submit for their consideration the question as to the proper place of deposit of the gifts received with the royal letters referred to."

By a joint resolution, 37th Congress, Second Session, Senate Executive Document No. 23, approved March 15 it was provided that the letter (s) from His Majesty the Major King of Siam and the accompanying gifts (a sword and scabbard, a photograph of the King, and a pair of elephant tusks) "be deposited in the collection of curiosities at the Department of the Interior."

Knowing that the people of Thailand would make inquiries concerning these relics, because they have great admiration for their kings, I instituted a search to determine their location. A letter from David C. Mearns, Chief of the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress, assisted me in this quest. On August 24, 1959 he wrote as follows: "Since my conversation with you, we have examined the annual reports of the Smithsonian Institution for the years 1862-1865 for information concerning either the Institution's receipt of the gifts presented to Mr. Lincoln by the King of Siam or their destruction in the Smithsonian fire of 1865. This search was in vain. Webster Prentiss True's and George Brown Goode's histories of the Smithsonian contained no mention of the Siamese gifts, and the Institution's Political History Division was unable to find any record of the Smithsonian having accommodated these tusks and other gifts.

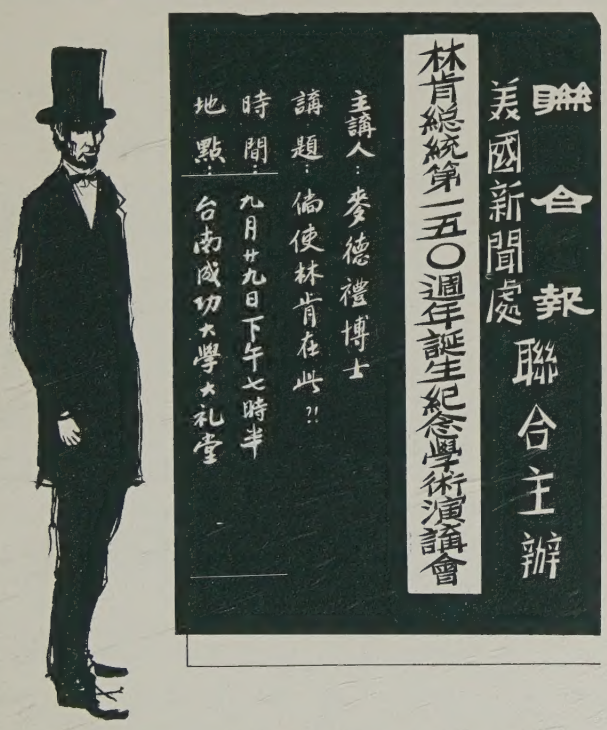
"The Library of the Department of the Interior has informed us that the phrase: 'the collection of curiosities at the Department of the Interior' in the Congressional resolution of March 15, 1862, in all probabilty was a reference to the model room in the United States Patent Office Building, and that it is also probable that these presents to President Lincoln were lost in the fire which destroyed the north and west halls of the model room on September 24, 1877."

This information concerning the loss of the relics was received by the Thai people, in the areas where I made addresses, with a great deal of regret.

In most of the countries of Asia where I delivered addresses it was necessary to use an interpreter. However, the great number of people in all of Asia who have some comprehension of the English language is remarkable. The one exception is the people of Thailand, who have heard very little English spoken in the interior provinces. Yet to save face they did not want to utilize the services of an interpreter. Instead a Thai version of my speeches was to be made available by a native Siamese who had made a study of the life of Lincoln. On many occasions I had some doubts as to whether my speech was being interpreted as I had given it. In fact, I often suspected that my audience was getting instead a Siamese version of Lincoln's life. Of course, this is a calculated risk one takes when one does not speak the language of the people whom he addresses. One of the most frustrating experiences is to address an audience of several thousand people, knowing full well that they do not understand one word you say. However, the system of using an interpreter can be quite effective, and I had the feeling on many occasions that I had gotten all my ideas across.

My government assignment was completed in Thailand in late November and my next stops were Manila, Philippine Islands, and Honolulu, Hawaii, where I was sponsored by the Theo. H. Davies & Co., Far East Limited (agency representatives of The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company). In Manila I made three addresses before a combined audience of 2,500 people, and in Honolulu I addressed the Rotary Club of 250 members.

During my trip to the Far East I came to have a very high regard for the American representatives who make up our Foreign Service. Never have I met more sincere or dedicated public servants. After almost three months in the Far East I came home thinking that the enlightened forces of democracy will eventually prevail over the insidious forces of communism. Furthermore, I am happy to think that I had some little part in that great battle that is being waged all over the world to win the minds of men. Perhaps, a State Department official was correct in his statement that "Abraham Lincoln is the most salable product this nation has to offer."



A printed poster used at Tainan and Kaohsiung, Taiwan, informing the public of a lecture on September 29 and 30, 1959 on Abraham Lincoln by Dr. R. Gerald McMurtry.

CUMULATIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY—1959

Selections approved by a Bibliography Committee consisting of the following members; Arnold Gates, 289 New Hyde Park Road, Garden City, N. Y.; Carl Haverlin, 2 Masterson Road, Bronxville, N. Y.; E. B. Long, 708 North Kenilworth Ave., Oak Park, Ill.; Richard F. Lufkin, 45 Milk Street, Boston, 9, Mass.; Wayne C. Temple, Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, Tenn.; Ralph G. Newman, 18 East Chestnut Street, Chicago 11, Ill.; William H. Townsend, 310 First National Bank Bldg., Lexington 3, Ky.; and Clyde C. Walton, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Ill.

New items available for consideration may be sent to the above addresses or to the Lincoln National Life Foundation.

BARINGER, WILLIAM E. **1959-70**

The Philosophy/of Abraham Lincoln/In His Own Words/Compiled/by/William E. Baringer/Professor of History/University of Florida/Executive Director/Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission/Washington, D. C./Falcon's Wing Press.

Book, cloth 5" x 7¾", xxxii pp., 167 pp., fr., price $3.50.

BROADCAST MUSIC, INC. **1959-71**

The Abraham Lincoln Story 1809-1959 is the current segment of the prize-winning/radio series The American Story, which is distributed as a public service/by Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI) to radio stations and to local boards of education, public/libraries and educational institutions to be used in connection with broadcasting.

Folder, paper, 8½" x 22". Continuation of 1959-26 and 1959-55. Scripts No. 41—60, 6—8 pages each.

GESELL, ARNOLD **1959-72**

Introduction/by Arnold Gesell, M. D./Lincoln's Youth/Indiana Years/Seven to Twenty-one/1816-1830/by Louis A. Warren.

Pamphlet, paper, 6" x 9", 8 pp. Privately printed, no copies available.

HARPER, ROBERT S. **1959-73**

During Two Journeys/I On the way to Washington/Lincoln and the Ohio General Assembly/II On the way to Springfield/"Ohio Mourns"/by Robert S. Harper/The Ohio Historical Society.

Pamphlet, paper, 5½" x 8½", (9) pp. A publication of the Ohio Lincoln Sesquicentennial Committee, Ohio State Museum, Columbus 10, Ohio.

HARPER, ROBERT S. **1959-74**

Lincoln's Other Scrapbook/by Robert S. Harper/The Ohio Historical Society.

Pamphlet, paper, 5½" x 8½", (9) pp. A publication of the Ohio Sesquicentennial Committee, Ohio State Museum, Columbus 10, Ohio.

HESSELTINE, WILLIAM B. **1959-75**

Abraham Lincoln:/architect/of the/nation/by/William B. Hesseltine/Professor of History/University of Wisconsin/The Allen County-Fort Wayne/Historical Society/1959.

Pamphlet, paper, 5½" x 8¼", 15 pp.

JAFFA, HARRY V. & JOHANNSEN, ROBERT W. **1959-76**

In the Name of the People/Speeches and Writings of Lincoln and Douglas/in the Ohio Campaign of 1859/Edited, with an introduction by/Harry V. Jaffa and/Robert W. Johannsen/Published for/The Ohio Historical Society/by/The Ohio State University Press/Columbus.

Book, cloth, 5½" x 8½", x p., 307 pp., price $5.00.

KNOX, KATHARINE McCOOK **1959-77**

(Lincoln portrait)/Abraham Lincoln/by George P. A. Healy/Corcoran Gallery of Art Washington, D. C./Photograph by Victor Amato/"Healy's Lincoln No. 1"/by Katharine McCook Knox/(Cover title).

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 4" x 9", (12) pp., price 50¢. Mrs. McCook Knox, 3259 N Street, N. W., Washington 7, D. C.

KRANZ, HENRY B. **1959-78**

Abraham Lincoln/A New Portrait/Edited by Henry B. Kranz/G. P. Putnam's Sons New York.

Book, cloth, 5¾" x 8½", 252 pp., fr., price $4.00.

LINCOLN MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY **1959-79**

Lincoln Memorial University Press/Summer 1959/Vol. 61, No. 2/Lincoln Herald/A Magazine devoted to historical research in the field of Lincolniana and of Lincoln Ideals in American Education.

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 7⅛", 10¼", 43—88 pp., illus.

McMURTRY, R. GERALD **1959-80**

Centre College/John Todd Stuart/and/Abraham Lincoln/by R. Gerald McMurtry/Reprinted from/The Filson Club History Quarterly/Louisville, Kentucky/April, 1959, Issue/Copyright 1959, by The Filson Club, Incorporated/(Cover title).

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 6¼" x 9½", 117-124 pp.

OHIO LINCOLN SESQUICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE **1959-81**

(Lincoln stamps on cover)/Cachets Covers/"Lincoln in Ohio"/Lincoln 1809-1865/(Cover title).

Pamphlet, paper, 8½" x 11", (6) pp. Contains blank spaces with captions for 11 covers. The Ohio Lincoln Sesquicentennial Committee, Ohio State Museum, Columbus 10, Ohio.

OSTENDORF, LLOYD **1959-82**

Mr. Lincoln/came to/Dayton/A Centennial Account of/Abrahom Lincoln's Visit to/Dayton, Ohio/1858/by Lloyd Ostendorf. Illustrated/The Otterbein Press-Dayton, Ohio/1959.

Brochure, cloth, 6¼" x 9¼", 49 pp., illus.

RICHARDS, BENJAMIN B. **1959-83**

A Catalogue of the/Sang Collection/of/Letters-Books-Manuscripts-Documents & Prints/Illustrating/"The Irrepressible Conflict"/An Exhibit from the collection of/Mr. and Mrs. Philip D. Sang, of River/Forest, Illinois. Held in Galesburg, Knox College, October 4-5-6-7, 1958 on/the anniversary of the Fifth Lincoln-Douglas Debate.

Pamphlet, paper, 5½" x 8½", 89 pp., illus. (Compiled in 1958 but not published until 1959).

ST. ONGE, ACHILLE J. **1959-84**

Abraham Lincoln/1809-1959/The Address by/Carl Sandburg/Before the/United States/Congress/Washington, D. C./February 12, 1959/1959/Achille J. St. Onge/Worcester.

Brochure, leather 2" x 2¾", 38 pp., Limited to 2000 copies, printed and bound by Proost en Brandt, Amsterdam, Holland.

WARREN, LOUIS A. **1959-85**

Lincoln's Youth/Indiana Years/Seven to Twenty-one/1816-1830/by Louis A. Warren/Indiana Historical Society/Indianapolis 1959.

Book, cloth, 6" x 9¼", xxii pp., 298 pp., fr., illus. Privately printed for the Indiana Historical Society by the Lakeside Press, R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company Chicago, Illinois and Crawfordsville, Indiana.

WARREN, LOUIS A. **1959-85a**

Lincoln's Youth/Indiana Years/Seven to Twenty-one/1816-1830/by Louis A. Warren/Appleton Century Crofts, Inc./New York.

Book, cloth, 6" x 9¼", xxii pp., 298 pp., fr., illus. Autographed edition, limited to 500 numbered copies.

WARREN, LOUIS A. **1959-85b**

Same as above.
Trade edition, price $6.00.

McMurtry's Speaking Itinerary

Albuquerque, N. Mex., Jan. 18, 19, 1960.
Phoenix, Ariz., Jan. 20—22.
San Diego, Calif., Jan. 25, 26.
Santa Ana, Calif., Jan. 27, 28.
Long Beach, Calif., Jan. 29.
Los Angeles, Calif., Feb. 1—5.
Fresno, Calif., Feb. 8, 9.
San Francisco, Calif., Feb. 10—16.
Oakland, Calif., Feb. 17—19.
Sacramento, Calif., Feb. 22, 23.

The persons who might be interested in learning of the schedule in detail in the various cities named above, may contact the general agency offices of The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company.